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ABSTRACT

The 1990 Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments mandate that vocational education planning for individuals with disabilities be coordinated by appropriate representatives of vocational education, special education, and state vocational rehabilitation agencies. The Florida Council on Vocational Education for Individuals with Disabilities was formed in response to the coordinated planning mandate to address the special needs of individuals with disabilities in vocational education on a statewide basis. It is the policy of Florida's Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education that each local education agency (LEA), including community colleges, establish a planning council on vocational education for individuals with disabilities. These local councils should meet regularly to assess needs and identify resources to provide services and activities to enable individuals with disabilities to succeed in vocational education and in the world of work. Throughout the planning process, local councils should address 10 key questions related to vocational education programs and special services with disabilities. Included among the issues addressed in the questions are the following: the number of students requiring services, current job market, available resources, determination of who is responsible for supporting and/or coordinating vocational programs and special services, and procedures for collecting and using follow-up data. (MN)

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Technical Assistance Paper #1

"Cooperative Planning"

Revised January, 1993

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For further information, contact:
Bureau of Vocational Programs and Services
Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education
Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
904/487-3164
Suncom 277-3164

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Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400
904/488-0400
Suncom 278-0400
800/342-9271

State Council on Vocational Education for Individuals with Disablities (SCVEID)

January, 1993

Contact persons:

Janet Adams
Division of Vocational, Adult and
Community Education
(904) 487-3164

Steve Dunaway
Developmental Disabilities Program Office
(904) 488-3673

Bill Murphy
Division of Blind Services
(904) 488-1330

Frances Kimber
Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health
Program Office
(904) 487-2415

Erin McColskey
Division of Community Colleges
(904) 488-0555

Sara Pankaskie
Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students
(904) 488-1106

Joanne Putnam
Division of Labor, Employment, and Training
(904) 487-2536

Cindy Taylor
Parent Representative
(904) 224-2677

David Thead
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(904) 488-8380

STATE COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Technical Assistance Paper #1 - Cooperative Planning
Revised January, 1993

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990, P.L. 101-392, was signed into law September 25, 1991. The purpose of this act is to make the United States more competitive in the world economy by developing more fully the academic and occupational skills of all segments of the population. In order to achieve this purpose, the following goals are addressed in the legislation: (1) increasing the participation of special needs students in vocational education; (2) improving the quality of vocational programs in schools with the greatest need; (3) raising the educational achievement of students, including members of special populations; and, (4) ensuring that vocational education students have the skills necessary to work in a technologically advanced society.

Coordinated Planning

Section 118 of the Act addresses criteria for services and activities for individuals who are members of special populations, including assurances of equal access. Coordinated planning is addressed in section 118(a)(3)(D), which states, "vocational education planning for individuals with handicaps will be coordinated between appropriate representatives of vocational education, special education, and State vocational rehabilitation agencies." The cooperative agreements between the Florida Department of Education - Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education; Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students; Division of Blind Services; and, the Florida Department of Labor and Employment Security, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, provide for coordinated planning. Coordinated planning assures that individuals with disabilities will be properly identified, assessed, informed, counseled, trained, and employed according to their interests, abilities, and special needs.

State Council

The State Council on Vocational Education for Individuals with Disabilities (formerly State Council on Vocational Education for the Handicapped) was formed in response to the coordinated planning mandate to address the special needs of individuals with disabilities in vocational education on a statewide basis. Members of the State Council include representatives from the Division of

Vocational, Adult and Community Education; Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students; Division of Community Colleges; Division of Blind Services; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Division of Labor, Employment and Training; Developmental Services Program Office; Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Program Office; Florida Governor's Alliance for Employment of Disabled Citizens; and, a parent representative.

The responsibilities of the State Council include the following:

1. Work to promote availability and accessibility of vocational programs and services to all students with disabilities.

2. Promote interagency and intra-agency communication at a statewide level.

3. Foster the development and expansion of Local Councils to address the broad issues of training and employment of students with disabilities, including program accessibility, assessment, transition, and supported employment.

4. Identify and raise other policy issues relating to vocational education for students with disabilities and recommend solutions.

5. Recommend statewide priorities for program development for vocational education for students with disabilities.

6. Distribute information to state and district level staff as well as other personnel in the field.

Local Councils

It is the policy of the Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education that each local education agency (LEA), including community colleges, will establish a planning council on vocational education for individuals with disabilities. The purpose of the Local Council is to provide vocational education planning for students with disabilities that is coordinated among appropriate agencies serving individuals with disabilities. The required membership for this council in the districts is a minimum of one member each from vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, and exceptional student education. It is recommended that the local planning council be expanded to include members representing: (1) Division of Blind Services; (2) Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services - Developmental Services, and Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Program Offices; (3) Private Industry Council (JTPA); (4) community colleges; (5) parents; (6) business/industry; and, (7) others as needed. When local education agencies have interagency committees in place, such as a transition committee or other multi-agency group that is addressing the

overall issue of training and employment of individuals with disabilities, and includes representatives from vocational education, exceptional student education, and vocational rehabilitation, this committee may serve the purpose of the local planning council on vocational education for individuals with disabilities. The main concern is that representatives from key groups provide input into the vocational education planning process on a regular basis.

For community colleges, the required membership for this council includes a minimum of one representative each from vocational education, disabled student services, and vocational rehabilitation. It is recommended that the local planning council be expanded to include members representing: (1) Division of Blind Services; (2) Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services - Developmental Services, and Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Program Offices; (3) Private Industry Council (JTPA); (4) Exceptional Student Education; (5) students; (6) business/industry; and, (7) others as needed. Multi-campus community colleges should establish local councils in such a way that both individual campus and college-wide planning needs may be addressed and coordinated. Community colleges that serve multiple school districts may wish to establish one interagency committee based on the college's service delivery area, to include representatives from each of the school districts served by the community college. The composition of the local planning council should lead to increased communication and collaboration among community college personnel as well as among community college, school district, and other agency personnel.

Long Range Planning

Long range, coordinated planning, on an on-going basis, is essential if quality vocational programs and services are to be accessible to students with disabilities. Planning for each individual student should be based on a lifelong continuum, with educators assessing the accessibility of programs and services at specific points along that continuum, such as prevocational activities, assessment, training, job placement, follow-up, retraining programs, and so on.

The Local Council should meet on a regular basis to assess needs, and identify resources to provide services and activities to enable individuals with disabilities to succeed in vocational education and subsequently, the world of work.

Recommending Federal Vocational Funding

The LEA representatives should inform Local Council members of proposed projects that require federal dollars for vocational education services and activities for individuals with disabilities

and work to coordinate these projects to address current needs identified by the Council. Letters of support from appropriate agencies may indicate participation in the overall planning process as well as recommendation of a specific proposal for funding services and activities.

Key Questions

Throughout the planning process, Local Council members should address many questions and issues related to vocational education programs and special services for students with disabilities. Resource persons may be invited to participate in council meetings to provide valuable information. Key questions and issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How many students will need special vocational programs and services?
- What kind of programs are accessible now? To whom?
- What is the job market like? How does this relate to training?
- What are barriers to making vocational programs accessible to students with disabilities?
- What resources are available for supporting vocational programs and special services for students with disabilities? (within departments/agencies and among departments/agencies)
- At the local level, who is responsible for coordinating these various resources, programs, and services?
- How are data concerning enrollment of students with disabilities in vocational education collected, reported, and used?
- How are follow-up data collected, reported, and used?
- What procedure is in place for tracking programs and services for students with disabilities on a continuous basis?
- What activities have been or will be implemented to facilitate interagency cooperation among personnel at all levels?

Summary

Experience has shown that the most effective vocational programs and services for students with disabilities are the result of a high level of cooperation and communication among representatives of various agencies serving individuals with disabilities. The needs are great; the resources are limited. No one group can meet all the needs of individuals with disabilities alone. Only by combining expertise and resources can we expect to provide the support needed by students with disabilities as they progress toward the outcome of successful transition from school to the world of work.

STATE COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Role and Responsibilities of the Council

1. Work to promote availability and accessibility of vocational programs and services to all students with disabilities.

2. Promote interagency and intra-agency communication at a statewide level.

3. Foster the development and expansion of Local Councils to address the broad issues of training and employment of students with disabilities, including program accessibility, assessment, transition, and supported employment.

4. Identify and raise other policy issues relating to vocational education for students with disabilities and recommend solutions.

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Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students

Division of Blind Services

Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Program Office

Developmental Services Program Office

Division of Labor, Employment and Training

Division of Community Colleges

Florida Governor's Alliance for Employment of Disabled Citizens

Parent Representative

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